

ON "THE CONCHOLOGICAL ILLUSTRATIONS," BY GEORGE  
BRETtingham SOWERBY, JUN., LONDON, 1832-41, AND THE  
"DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF SHELLS," BY JOHN EDWARD  
GRAY, 1832.

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*Read 12th March, 1909.*

At the request of Mr. Edgar Smith I have put together here my notes on these two works.

About 1830 G. B. Sowerby, sen., and J. E. Gray agreed to bring out a joint publication under the title "The / Conchological / Illustrations, / or / Coloured Figures / of all the hitherto unfigured / recent shells, / by G. B. Sowerby, Junr. / with the corresponding text of a / Descriptive Catalogue / of / Shells, / by / John Edward Gray, Esq., F.R.S., &c. /"

Four proofs exist of pp. 1-22 (Cypræidæ) and three proofs of pp. 1, 2 (Strombidæ), and one proof of the original title page of Gray's work (dated London, 1832) in the Gray Tracts, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), viz., Tracts on Mollusca, 8vo, vol. viii (4), xi (14), xxi (12), and Tracts on Mollusca by English writers, i (10). The signature of the Cypræidæ reads "Gray's Descrip. Cat. Shells, Part I.—June 1832," and that of the Strombidæ the same, omitting the words "Part I."

It is evident that this joint scheme was at once upset, for in part 1 of "The Conchological Illustrations, or Coloured Figures of all the hitherto unfigured recent shells, by G. B. Sowerby, Junr." (London, 1832), the following note is printed on the back of the title page: "The intention of giving the text of a Descriptive Catalogue of Shells by John Edward Gray, Esq., F.R.S., &c., in company with these Conchological Illustrations having been abandoned, the names of the species figured in each part will now be given with it, and as complete a catalogue as can be made will be added in the course of publishing each genus. Such Catalogue will consist of the names of all the species that can be ascertained, together with the locality and a reference to a figure when any is known: and when there is no good previous figure known, one will be given. A reference to the author whose name is adopted will be added, together with concise descriptions of the new species. The Conchological Illustrations will thus form a very complete addition to Wood's Catalogue of Shells" (Gray, Tracts of Natural History, i (8); Radcliffe Library, Oxford, *vide* H. O. N. Shaw). The original circular for Sowerby's work (Gray, Tracts of Natural History, i (8)) is still preserved, and states: "Price 1s. 6d. Part I, to be continued weekly, of Conchological Illustrations . . . It was at first intended to have published this work in monthly parts . . . it has, however, been deemed advisable . . . to publish it in weekly parts . . . the first part will contain 14 figures of seven species of Cowries and the Cowries will be

continued in some of the following parts." The weekly issue soon broke down, and is no guide to the dates.

Gray's original circular (Gray's Tracts on Mollusca, viii (4)) states that of his "Descriptive Catalogue of Shells" part 1 will be published on 1st of July (1832), and "contemporaneously with this work will appear Coloured figures of the hitherto unfigured shells described in Mr. Gray's Descriptive Catalogue, by George B. Sowerby, junr."

The reason of the breach between Sowerby and Gray may be inferred from a letter inserted in this circular, dated 15th September, 1832, in which G. B. Sowerby says: "I am glad you have sent me some copies of your three first half sheets [i.e. 24 pp.], but I must see you again on the subject, for it is so incorrectly printed that I cannot resolve to publish it."

The issue of "The Conchological Illustrations," therefore, would seem to have begun about October, 1832, and each part was to have had a list of contents printed on small paper, which in the 1841 "Directions to Binder" were ordered to be cancelled, as they were reprinted in "Part 200."

Such, then, is the history of these two works, one of which, Gray's "Descriptive Catalogue of Shells," exists only as proof-sheets, and was never published; the other, "The Conchological Illustrations," being issued in 200 parts between 1832 and 1841.

Owing to the peculiar method of issue of "The Conchological Illustrations" it is extremely difficult to provide a complete collation, as most copies have been bound up in accordance with instructions and the clues [lists of contents] destroyed. But the Radcliffe Library copy has been bound in sequence of numbers as issued, and Mr. H. O. N. Shaw has kindly contributed to your journal his researches in the following communication.

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